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SUBJECT: ZABUL PROVINCE: SECURITY IMPROVES, ALLOWING MORE  
DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION

REF: A) Kabul 1030, B) Kabul 1137

11. (SBU) Summary: Security in Zabul is improving thanks to the Focused District Development (FDD) program, but an unintended consequence of better-trained police is that they are attractive to other employers. With improved security comes a focus on road building, training and other development projects. Governor Arman is hopeful that a business park currently under construction will attract businesses and the international community to Zabul.

#### Governor Arman Leads the Way

12. (SBU) Zabul Governor Delbar Jan Arman, now in his fourth year leading the province, has begun to see his vision of "putting Zabul on the map" take shape. At the same time, perhaps because of improved security, governance, and reconstruction, he has become impatient with central government ministries that seem to impede his vision of making Zabul an agricultural and commercial powerhouse with a modern provincial capital city. His most serious conflict is with the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), which has increasingly asserted its right to direct all police operations in Zabul without guidance from, or coordination with, Governor Arman. (NOTE: Currently, Afghan law does not provide for a clear division of authority between the governor and the MOI when it comes to the police. Parliament's lower house is considering related amendments to the 2005 Police Law.) The Governor has also found himself at odds with some members of the Provincial Council, who criticize him for not delivering more visible progress in reconstruction. These accusations may be based on a shift in development focus from quick-impact projects to less visible community-led programs and capacity-building in the provincial government.

#### SECURITY: POSITIVE RESULTS FROM FDD

13. (SBU) Zabul's three Highway One districts (Shajoy, Qalat, and Tarnak-wa-Jaldak) were in the first FDD cycle. FDD improved highway security, eliminating illegal tolls collected by some Afghan National Police, particularly the so-called Afghan Highway Police, and by others. Both anecdotal and formal survey data show that the population in all three districts has a much improved view of the ANP (ref A).

14. (SBU) Despite FDD's success, serious problems remain with Zabul ANP. ANP patrolmen and NCOs are resigning at an alarming rate (at least 90 have resigned in the past four months), and there are many fewer ANP on duty in Zabul than the MOI's Tashkil (staffing plan) specifies. ANP are resigning in an orderly fashion, turning in

their weapons and uniforms, and there is no indication that they are going over to the enemy. Rather, according to interviews with a number of ex-ANP, they are taking advantage of their training and experience to obtain better-paying jobs with the ANA (8000 versus 5000 afghanis per month, or USD 160 versus 100) or private security firms, which pay up to 18,000 afghanis (USD 360) per month.

¶5. (SBU) The previous U.S. Army Police Mentor Team (PMT) that oversaw FDD implementation in Zabul was primarily concerned with teaching the FDD graduates small unit infantry tactics needed to conduct patrols. The new PMT that took over in April has focused on leadership, management and accountability. It is an open secret in Zabul that there are no more than 800 active ANP personnel, while over 1400 collect salaries. (NOTE: The Afghan Year 1387 Tashkil, approved in May 2008, authorizes 2,082 ANP, including 836 Afghan uniformed police and 854 border police.) The ANP leadership, who rarely leave provincial police headquarters, do not know how many ANP are active at any given post. The new PMT is trying to rectify ANP salary discrepancies, and recently the provincial Chief of Police (COP) arrested three of his headquarters staff officers for embezzlement. To the great annoyance of the COP, PMT and Governor, the MOI told the COP to release the suspects - despite clear evidence against them - apparently because one of them is the Minister of Interior's cousin. The Governor and COP resisted, and the officers remain imprisoned. The ANP housecleaning process will be painful and somewhat destabilizing, but is a necessary step to create a professional, reasonably honest police force in Zabul.

#### Development: Better Security Permits Road Construction

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¶6. (SBU) Although plans and funding to pave roads connecting Qalat

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City to the districts have existed for over two years, insecurity held up construction. In the first half of 2008, security operations stopped enemy attacks against road workers. Construction is moving ahead on "Route Duck", an asphalt road linking Qalat City to Shinkay scheduled to be completed in August 2009. Construction on "Route Chicken," linking Qalat City to Mizan, is also proceeding.

#### Capacity-Building in the Provincial Government

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¶7. (U) USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program came into full swing in the first half of 2008. Six Afghan national trainers employed by Development Alternatives International (DAI) conducted workshops on office skills and public administration for Zabul line ministry departments. The PRT supplemented this training by partnering civil affairs personnel with line ministry directors. DAI and the PRT also provided direct mentoring to the Secretariat of the Provincial Development Committee to develop procedures for running efficient and productive meetings. DAI conducted a one-week workshop on public administration for district administrators. Feedback regarding this training has been uniformly positive, and every line ministry department now has in place at least rudimentary accounting and personnel systems. Thanks to the recent arrival in Qalat of a highly capable Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) Advisor, the PRT expects even greater progress in capacity building in the line ministry departments throughout 2008.

#### Agriculture at the Heart of the Economy

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¶8. (U) The addition of a USDA Advisor to PRT Qalat and a greater USAID commitment of funds to agricultural programs has led to tangible progress in the agriculture sector. Under the supervision of the Agriculture Director and USDA Advisor, the previously moribund "tree nursery" in Qalat City has been transformed into a lush "Zabul Horticultural Research Station and Nursery." The facility includes test plots for improved seed varieties and a test orchard. Zabul's wheat harvest is above average thanks to the heavy snows last winter and extensive improvements in irrigation systems from World Food Program (WFP) food-for-work programs and CERP-funded well and irrigation projects. The Agriculture Department, in collaboration with the USDA Advisor, USAID, Women's Affairs Director, and Social Affairs Director, are running programs that

train and pay women to plant and care for seedling trees at the Horticultural Research Station and to raise chickens at their homes.

The poultry-raising program provides the women with a month of training in poultry care, and gives the women's families materials and training to construct chicken coops. At the end of the training, each woman receives 15 pullets. These programs address the Governor and PDC's plans for re-foresting parts of Zabul, increasing wheat yields, increasing production of income-generating export crops (especially almonds and pomegranates) that can be easily transported on Highway One, and establishing a profitable poultry industry.

#### "Putting Zabul on the Map"

19. (U) Two crucial pieces of Governor Arman's vision for "putting Zabul on the map" are the completion of a government/education/commercial center in Qalat City (ref B) and intensive development of alternative energy solutions. Arman, a trained hydro-electric engineer, is committed to implementing solar, wind and mini-hydro power and irrigation projects in Zabul. The business park is partially built, but will require approximately 30 million USD to complete. Governor Arman hopes that the business park will draw NGOs, IOs, and businesses to Zabul, driving robust wealth creation and economic growth, supported by ongoing improvements in secondary roads and increased agricultural production. But this will remain little more than a vision until funding can be found.

WOOD